

State of California
Department of Industrial Relations
**California Commission on
Health and Safety and
Workers' Compensation**

The Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation is a joint labor-management body mandated to oversee the health and safety and workers' compensation systems in California and mandated to recommend administrative or legislative modifications to improve their operation.



Highlights from:

The Forum on Catastrophe Preparedness: Partnering to Protect Workplaces

Held on Friday, April 7, 2006

**South San Francisco Conference Center
255 So. Airport Blvd.
South San Francisco, CA**



The Great 1906 San Francisco Earthquake



San Francisco City Hall after the 1906 Earthquake. A view of San Francisco after the earthquake and fire. (Photos from the Karl V. Steinbrugge Collection, Earthquake Engineering Research Center, U.C. Berkeley)

- One hundred years after the catastrophic earthquake of 1906, earthquake risk and the risk of other catastrophes including terrorism continue to loom large for Californians and the nation.
- As we have learned from September 11, the risk of a catastrophe while people are at work and the risks to the workers who respond require the urgent attention of employers, workers and policymakers.
- This conference brought together leaders in homeland security, emergency response, and occupational safety and health to discuss individual, worker and employer preparedness for catastrophic risks.



Forum on Catastrophe Preparedness: Partnering to Protect Workplaces

- Recognizing that employers and workers should be prepared if a catastrophe strikes at the workplace, the Commission embarked on a series of programs focusing on assessing and identifying how best to mitigate the potential enormous impact of such an event.
- The first program presented last year by the Commission was directed to workers' compensation insurers and addressed their capability to respond to the demands of terrorism or natural catastrophe.
- The April Forum was the second part of a public education forum to provide an opportunity to discuss and share ideas for safety in responding to terrorist attacks and natural disasters, learn lessons from other experiences, as well as consider areas where improvements need to be made.



Forum on Catastrophe Preparedness: Partnering to Protect Workplaces

- **Selected Presenters**

- **Richard Baum**, Chief Deputy Commissioner, California Department of Insurance
- **Phyllis Cauley**, Chief, Preparedness Branch, Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES)
- **Max Kiefer**, Assistant Director for Emergency Preparedness, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
- **Hemant Shah**, President and CEO, Risk Management Solutions (RMS)
- **Mary Lou Zoback**, Senior Research Scientist, U.S. Geological Survey
- **Lynn Davis**, Senior Political Scientist, RAND
- **Harvey Ryland**, Former Deputy Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- **Frances Edwards**, Former Director, City of San Jose Office of Emergency Services
- **Vickie Wells**, Director of Occupational Safety and Health, San Francisco Department of Public Health
- **Larry Klein**, Chair, California Seismic Safety Commission
- **Deborah Gold**, Avian Influenza Preparedness Program Coordinator, Division of Occupational Safety and Health, DIR



**Program Committee
Program Co-Chairs**

Christine Baker, Executive Officer, CHSWC
Robert T. Reville, RAND Corporation

- **Agenda**
- Selected agenda items included:
- Impact of a 1906 Earthquake Today
- Profile of Risk to California Workers from a variety of Catastrophe Scenarios
- Is California Prepared if a Disaster Strikes at Work
- Employer and Worker Preparedness for Natural Disasters and Terrorist Attack
- Workers Protecting the Workplace: The Safety and Health of Emergency Responders
- Roles of Federal, State and Local Agencies in Disaster Preparedness and Response
- Recommendations for the Future



The forum was held by CHSWC in collaboration with the following sponsors and participants:

The Labor and Workforce Development Agency, the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), Division of Occupational Safety and Health Cal/OSHA, RAND, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the California Labor Federation, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, the Department of Health Services, the California Department of Insurance, Risk Management Solutions, Swiss RE, the US Geological Survey (USGS), the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), the Center for Occupational and Environmental Health at the University of California Berkeley, and the California Workers' Compensation Institute.

- The Forum on Catastrophe Preparedness: Partnering to Protect Workplaces is a member of the 1906 Centennial Alliance. The 1906 Centennial Alliance was formed to help coordinate and promote activities between organizations throughout Northern California that are commemorating the 1906 earthquake and that are discussing issues relevant to today. For more information about other educational resources and events in your community, please visit: <http://1906centennial.org/>**

Special Thanks to These and Many Other Participating Organizations



www.cwci.org

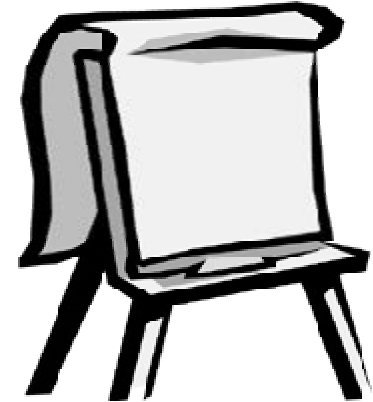
California Workers' Compensation Institute



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

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Four main themes were presented during the forum:

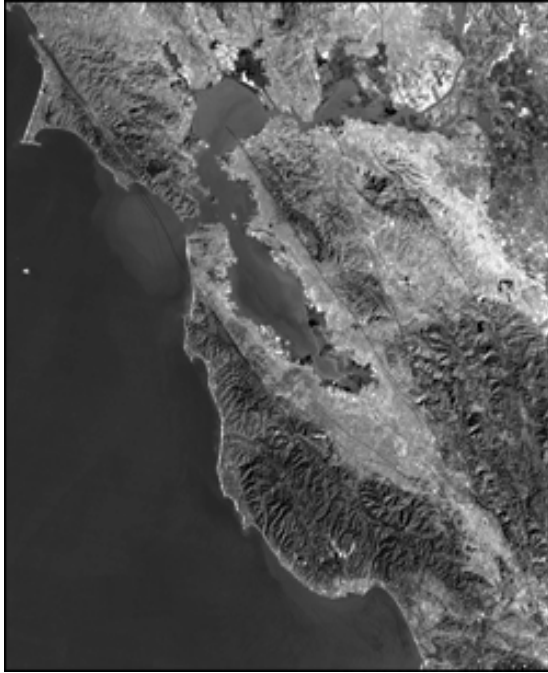
- 1. Disaster preparedness is an occupational safety and health issue.**
- 2. Occupational safety and health is about labor and employer cooperation and communication, and public and private partnerships.**
- 3. Preparedness includes first responder safety, and the definition of first responder has been broadened to include employees themselves.**
- 4. The insurance system is a critical part of preparedness—compensation is necessary for rebuilding, and the insurance system supports the families of the deceased and seriously injured.**

Preparation

Seismic Preparation:



- Building codes are designed to save lives, not save buildings or businesses, placing emphasis on business continuity planning. Building codes apply only to new buildings, and a lot of old buildings still exist.
- Buildings located on fault lines and landfill are at greatest seismic risk. The San Jose area will experience the greatest after-effects of a quake—the ground with its high water table and the buildings on top of it will continue to be in motion for minutes after an initial quake. Industrial areas that rapidly grew in the 1970s and 1980s and that used the relatively inexpensive “tilt-up” vertical wall-to-roof connection are particularly vulnerable—like a house of cards.
- The most hazardous and riskiest fault is the Hayward Fault along the east bay from Fremont, Hayward, Oakland, and Berkeley, continuing to the Roger’s Creek fault zone. More than 2 million people live on this fault zone.



Preparation

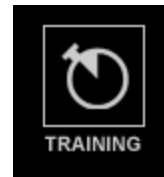
Seismic Preparation:

The likelihood of a repeat of the 1906 earthquake along the San Andreas Fault is not great, as it will take several hundred years to reaccumulate the strain. However, a smaller event such as a magnitude 7 on the peninsular portion of the San Andreas Fault does have a much higher likelihood.

- **Infrastructure damage from an earthquake or an act of terrorism may prevent a planned response due to a lack of transportation alternatives and dispersed first responders.**
- **The retrofit problem – most businesses and commercial property owners are not required to retrofit their buildings (there is an exception requirement for hospitals and unreinforced masonry only) – raises the safety risk in the area, as well as the business-continuity risk.**
- **Non-structural hazards (falling hazards from ceiling or shelves, unsecured hazardous materials, fires) in buildings may be life-threatening, even if building is up to code or retrofitted.**

Hurdles to Seismic and other Preparedness:

“A community cannot survive a disaster unless its businesses survive the disaster.”



- Many people do not have a full understanding of how rapidly a catastrophic event will unfold—there will be no time for outside direction to save lives. The state of individual preparedness is now a 72-hour self-sufficiency standard—any coordinated and prioritized command and control official response will take at least 72 hours, and that is if you are a priority !
- Threat evaluation is inadequate, as there is a conscious or unconscious expectation that government will save the day. Although California has some of the best emergency response systems as a result of past experiences with disasters, even the most robust governments will be strained in the event of a catastrophe. Government and private emergency responders will not be able to handle all the demands during the time of the disaster.



“Time to activate our plan.”

Overcoming hurdles to preparedness:

**Federal,
State,
Local,
Banking, &
Retail
incentives.**



- To overcome hurdles at work, a business continuity plan should be presented as an insurance policy.
- Incentives are the only way to solve the retrofit problem and to encourage other disaster resistant materials use for fire or floods—such as federal and state tax and fee incentives, local government fee and permitting incentives, banking interest rate and fee incentives, and retail discount incentives.
- Unfunded mandates cannot solve the retrofit problem.



Overcoming hurdles to preparedness:

- Preparedness is as strong as its weakest link – security guards at office buildings have inadequate training and compensation.
- Small business advocates state that small businesses need simple solutions and specific recommendations to make preparation feasible; otherwise, preparation becomes a low priority that is forgotten when it is not a “hot issue.”
- Mitigation – awareness, education, self-assessment and professional consultation are the best preparation steps, but preparedness is still a voluntary activity that may not end up on a priority list.



Simple tips: examples

- Collect emergency contact information for all employees, including employee personal cell phones and emails.
- Business continuity plans need to take into consideration employees who live in close proximity since infrastructure damage may prevent more senior-level personnel who live farther from work to be available.
- Create a messaging system so that employees can get detailed information about alternative worksites and reporting instructions, and so that families can call in to learn about the whereabouts or safety of an employee.



Simple tips: examples

- Hold evacuation drills and educate and train all employees about workplace safety, “duck and cover,” safety systems and precautions.
- Store a 72-hour Self-Preparedness Kit in car or at work desk, including sturdy shoes, food, water and medications.
- Create scenarios of 10%-30% decreases in the workforce which detail how work will continue to get done, as part of the planning process.
- Create a staff succession plan, as no one can lead or manage during a catastrophe for days on end.



Partnerships

- Preparedness requires cooperation, communication and collaboration. To be effective, there needs to be coordination, collaboration, and public-private partnerships, as well as labor-management partnerships for disaster preparedness, mitigation and response.
- Relationships should be made before they are needed; everyone should know who to call at each stage of planning, response and recovery; business cards should not have to be exchanged in the aftermath of a catastrophic event.
- Shared responsibility, shared accountability and shared leadership are ways Californians can work together to plan and prepare.



Partnerships

- Despite partnerships in preparedness, stakeholder negotiations will become inevitable during the recovery phase due to the “uncertain science” in some disasters.
- Dual-use preparedness structures may help overcome reluctance by different groups to adopt planning modes. The challenge, therefore, is to make preparedness activities and organizations sustainable and supportive of non-disaster functionality.
- An example of a local partnership is the Los Angeles Business and Industrial Council for Emergency Planning and Preparedness (BICEPP), a non-profit self-help corporation made up of businesses and municipalities.
- One healthcare employer describes an internal and external collaboration to equate to “community readiness.”



First Responders

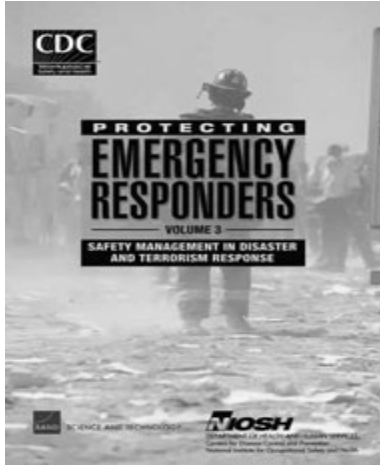
New “Worker Safety and Health Annex” provides for:

- Coordination of federal safety and health assets for proactive consideration of all potential hazards
- Ensures availability and management of all safety resources needed by responders
- Shares responder safety-related information
- Coordinates among Federal agencies, State, local, and tribal governments, and private-sector organizations involved in responses to nationally significant events.



First Responders

- Proper training and accurate hazard assessment are necessary to determine correct equipment.
- Infrastructure damage from an earthquake or an act of terrorism may prevent a planned response due to a lack of transportation alternatives and dispersed first responders.
- Coordinated and interoperable communications methods/protocols while seldom needed, will be needed in times of crisis management involving disparate responder groups.
- Standards still need to be aligned between Federal and State.
- Protective gear will continue to involve a trade-off between protection and acceptance/practicality.



First Responders

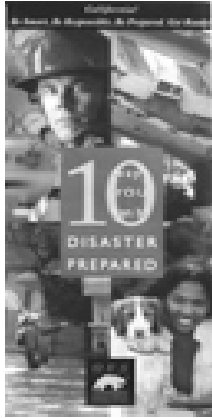
- Following established response procedures requires accurate information, decision-analysis and communication.
- Better hazard assessment will dramatically improve safety.
- Non-routine events challenge the system and traditional training, requiring a different, integrated way of managing and coordinating.

Recommendations

- Preparedness requires cooperation, communication and collaboration.
- Public-private partnerships as well as labor-management partnerships should be pursued in disaster preparedness plans, and mitigation and response activities.
- Private sector and government agencies may want to take a closer look at how to best to be prepared at the local level.
- Private sector and government need to assess if there are appropriate incentives in place to encourage--and offset the costs of--mitigating and responding to disasters.

Recommendations

- There needs to be ongoing communication between government agencies, employers, employees and safety personnel about disaster preparedness, mitigation and response.
- In addition to police, firefighters, and emergency management personnel, many other parties will need to be considered as emergency responders. They include employees, employers, security guards, healthcare workers and public works workers.
- Small businesses need to address planning and training. Small business advocates indicate that until now disaster preparedness has not been a priority for small businesses due to a lack of resources.



www.rand.org/events/catastrophe_prep.html

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